"Leaders make sacrifices that others are not willing to make in order to achieve greatness. They outperform their colleagues and hold themselves to unachievable standards."



How would you define a "leader"; whether a leader of people, process, or performance?

To me, a leader is someone who is admired by others for being the best at what they do. They garner respect by carrying themselves with humility while eagerly pursuing a path towards excellence. They understand how to extract the full potential of those they work with and promote mutual success. They understand how to take the standard way of doing things and improve it dramatically. A leader is someone who works harder than who works the hardest. They take extreme ownership in difficult situations to determine how they could have performed better. A leader is someone who is open to constructive criticism from anyone and is a master of communication. A leader earns the respect he/she is given.

What do you think are the most important qualities and/or skills in leadership? How would you say those are applied in your leadership style?

I believe one important quality of a leader is strong work ethic. Leaders make sacrifices that others are not willing to make in order to achieve greatness. They outperform their colleagues and hold themselves to unachievable standards. I feel that I have always been independently motivated and driven to succeed at whatever I'm doing. I would attribute this to my strong work ethic. Another important quality of a leader is their ability to create strong relationships with people. I value the relationships that I build with my colleagues, friends, family, and patients. Showing others that I care about them as much or more than I do about my own pursuits helps command respect as a leader.

Share your story in becoming a leader for our Northern MI area.

I feel that I am qualified as a leader in the dental profession for Northern Michigan. I sacrificed my twenties to complete my dental education faster than most in the nation. I was awarded $25,000 by Delta Dental, Michigan's leading dental insurance, in recognition for my commitment of dental services to underserved parts of the state. I moved north and quickly became involved in Northern Michigan's organized dental community. After three years and at the age of 30, I was elected as a board member for the Resort District of the Michigan Dental Association. I am responsible for helping coordinate and plan all of the events for the dentists in Northwest Michigan. I have completed more hours of continued education in six years to achieve certifications in dentistry that many don't reach throughout their career, such as graduating from the Pankey Institute. I helped grow a startup dental practice for a few years before purchasing my own practice. I have successfully grown the revenue of the business over 7 times what it was in our first year and averaged about 80 new patients each month. I have mentored roughly 10 young students and dentists at different points in their professional journeys. In the city I practice, I actively donate my time and services to many students at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, especially the international students. I remain the preferred dentist for the entire Arts Academy and many of its staff. I am also an active member of the Interlochen Chamber of Commerce and continue to support local businesses in our area.

As a nominee for "Leaders of Northern MI", what is your advice to others aspiring to become a leader in their community?

My strongest advice to others is to understand that hard work and determination are behind successful leadership. Reaching the top as a leader can't be boiled down to simple advice, and it is difficult for someone great to teach others how to be great. I think it is important to take the key characteristics of those you admire and incorporate them on your own path to success.

Trevor Kay

Owner/Dentist,
Northern Shores Dental Group